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FICTION.

THE greatest incumbrance of ancient writings is the abundance of fiction, with which their truths are mingled. Scarce a hero is mentioned, whose birth was not occasioned or accompanied by a prodigy ; or a city, in whose foundation the gods had no share. In the poems of Homer, the only complete record of the times which they describe, we find the deities controlling every event of the wars, while the heroes are scarcely at their own disposal. Thus are many of the most animated parts of the Iliad rendered uninteresting or unpleasant. We feel but little disposed to admire the prowess of Diomed in discomfiting Mars, when Pallas is represented as turning aside the javelin of the hostile god, and directing that of the favourite hero. Hector appears but an indifferent warriour, when Apollo must continually interpose to save his life, or rescue his troops from defeat. Nor will the conquerer of that hero acquire the deathless renown, for which he sacrificed length of days, by a victory which was owing in a great measure to the assistance of a goddess. Yet were poetry only thus corrupted by

fiction, our loss would be of little consequence; since in reading poetry, our object is delight rather than instruction. It is in historical prose that fictions not only excite disgust or regret, but produce serious injury. Few of the Lives of Plutarch are free from fables, which the understanding only of a child can relish. These are narrated with as much gravity as important facts, and the most scrupulous care is displayed in assigning the different degrees of credit due, in his opinion, to stories which to us appear all equally improbable. We are presented with nicely balanced authorities upon both sides of the question, whether Romulus and Remus were born of Mars and suckled by a she-wolf, or begotten by a mortal father and nursed by a woman, who received the title of that animal for a nickname. These fables, as they arose from the heathen mythology, are happily refuted and exposed by that religion, which suspended it. But there are other fictions, the detection of which time has rendered impracticable. To us they are apparently as well founded as truths, and we must either believe many falsehoods, or renounce much of the information, which ancient history supplies. Such is our unpleasant alternative. The authors of antiquity appear indeed to have written for posterity (as was observed by one of their number) since they have asserted such falsities, as their own age only could detect. Yet whatever may have been their motive, whether it was to flatter their own countrymen, or to raise the reputation of their heroes, they deserve the highest indignation of posterity for thus poisoning* the wells of truth. So plausibly related are some of these fictions, that not a few among the moderns, considering them as indisputable, have endeavoured to account for them in ways equally impossible. Rollin and others have ascribed the reputed

* "Ὁ, Πελοποννήσιοι φάρμακα ἐσβεβλήκοιεν ἐς τὰ ῥέεθρα."
Thucyd.

answers of the oracle at Delphi to the interposition of Satan.

This negligence, or worse than negligence, of the ancients in their histories, was imitated in many succeeding ages. The numberless legends of the monks of the early centuries of the Christian æra, which they spent their lives in composing, and many of which it would require an ordinary life to read, witness this unhappy imitation too plainly. We have accounts of wonderous miracles of the saints of their days, which their authors by a pious fraud had adduced to the defence of the gospel, but which have tended greatly to its injury. By piling their rubbish to serve as outworks to the citadel of Christianity, they have only furnished a foundation for the offensive engines of its enemies. It is from this that many in all ages have argued against the truth of our religion. It is here that Gibbon has taken his stand, and hence discharged the venomous shafts of his wit. The monkish histories are now little credited, and happily the times of their production were so much disturbed by revolutions and shrouded by darkness, that the most authentick records would yield little instruction or amusement. Since the revival of learning, history, to be read at all, must be free from fable. It now admits of no exaggerations, but those which result from passion or prejudice: and this is the greatest perfection to which we can expect it to arrive.

Yet though thus numerous and important are the evils which result from fiction when admitted into history, it is not destitute of advantages, when confined to its proper sphere. To exhibit it with the aspect of truth is extremely censurable, but to introduce it merely to engage our attention and enforce instruction, without attempting to deceive our understanding, is eminently serviceable to virtue. When we view the fatal effects of vice in a fictitious character of

our own nature, they are brought home to our minds more directly, than by the most energetick remonstrances. Our fancy is cheated for a moment, but our feelings are roused and our heart is touched. Such lessons does the youthful mind especially require. Such is the province of fiction, and to that may it always be confined. Here and here alone may it be of the highest benefit.

HISTORICAL NOVELS.

NO novels are so common at the present day, as those that are founded on historical facts. Our modern novelists seldom weave their story from the airy web of fiction, which is certainly the most proper material for its contexture ; but select some real personage, whose actions border most on the romantick and wonderful, and make him the Atlas to support their cumbrous load of exploits, that were never performed, of sufferings, that were never endured, and perhaps of crimes, that were never perpetrated. It is difficult to see any advantage to be gained by such a species of writing, that can induce any one to quit the path that has been marked out by the best novelists. The most celebrated novels in our language are not founded on history. Richardson, Fielding, and Miss Burney discarded it entirely, and framed all their works from fiction. Unless some advantage can be obtained by the change, it is at best but useless to desert the track of these admired authors. Their writings shew us at least that the novelist does not need the assistance of history ; while the historical ones of their successors shew us plainly the necessity of fiction.

We may easily trace three ages in novel-writing, which succeeded each other, however, in a different order from that

of the four great ages of the world that are fabled by the poets. The first may truly be called the *brazen* age. Nothing was then sung but battles and warlike achievements. Knights and distressed damsels, giants and sorcerers, embattled towers, splendid tournaments, and sea-washed caverns composed "the wild and wonderous song." To this, after a long time, and by gradual improvement, succeeded the *golden* age. Novels were now founded on fiction; and did not, like their predecessors, abandon reason and nature. Their scenes were those of real life: they represented natural situations, described probable events, and delineated characters, of which we could scarcely help fancying we knew the originals. Nothing was forced or unnatural. Nothing wonderful was then introduced merely to surprise us, or absurd to excite our laughter, or tedious only to swell out the volume. The present may pass very well for the third, or *silver* age; for it has neither the absurdity of the first, nor the excellence of the second.

One reason only can be assigned for the introduction of the last; yet most writers, we readily believe, will think it a very satisfactory one: this may be summed up in one word, *ease*, which is as mighty and magical a word among most of our modern authors, as *economy* among some of our modern politicians. In writing historical novels, a large quota of imagination and invention, which are two of the most essential qualifications for a novelist, may be very well spared. A person may write a very good novel with the aid of history, who would write but an indifferent one without its assistance. Little is necessary to be done by him, but to select the life of some individual, famous for his virtues, his vices, or his misfortunes, as the subject of the work, and acquaint himself with it as well as possible;—the more it is involved in fable, and the less that is certainly known of it, the better. Those parts of it that cannot be made interest-

ing, may be omitted ; those that can, may be enlarged and embellished. Incidents, of whatever kind the writer pleases, will naturally arise from the temper and character of the hero, and the situations in which history actually places him ; or, when that source of information fail, those in which he *may be supposed* to be placed, according to former circumstances and situations. Thus the tale may be crowded with incidents rising regularly from each other. A few characters, either wholly or partly fictitious, may be introduced without a great deal of difficulty, and thus complete the novel : and all this, with a comparatively small portion of, what we are all so willing to avoid, trouble.

But though this accounts fully for an author's predilection in favour of this kind of writing, it does not at all for the reader's. Let us see then what qualities it possesses, that so successfully assume the form of excellences. The admirers of historical novels may perhaps assert that they are more interesting than any other, since they are founded on facts : and reality appeals more strongly to the feelings than fiction. But truth and fable are so blended with each other in these compositions, that, unless we are perfectly versed in the occurrences of the times, we are often in doubt with respect to the correctness of the facts that are related. Indeed, we shall find on examination, that our feelings are most interested in the fictitious parts of the narrative. If those parts that are historically true are the most interesting, let us consult the pages of history ; we shall there find them more faithfully and accurately depicted. If we are perusing an account of the sufferings of a friend, we are certainly more interested in it, than if it were a mere tale ; but our uncommon interest in the narration arises *only* from our attachment to the individual, whose sufferings are there related. In reading a novel, there is nothing of this : we would hence infer, that the degree of interest excited does

not depend at all upon the truth of the relation. Are we the more interested in Shakspeare's Macbeth (for this reasoning applies equally to the novel and the drama) because history informs us that such a tyrant really existed? or is our attention less strongly arrested by his Hamlet than by his Henries? The emotions that agitate us, while reading a novel, do not result from reason, but from feeling: they are not the offspring of the understanding, but of the heart. If the tale be entirely a fiction, the warmth of our feelings often hurries us into a temporary delusion, and we cannot help imagining that the scenes described are actually passing before us. Recollection indeed dissolves this charm, but it leaves our emotions as vivid as ever. In fine, the person who can derive more interest from the perusal of an historical than a fictitious novel, we may safely conclude to be one who reasons himself into passion, and accommodates his degree of emotion to the degree of historical evidence. Thus far to shew that historical novels do not excite greater interest than fictitious ones: but this is not all. In every tale, we are chiefly interested in the destiny of its hero: upon this, the fortunes of many of the most conspicuous characters seem in great measure to depend. This source of interest is greatly diminished, if not entirely taken away, in historical novels. A slight acquaintance with the transactions of the times, though it may not give us the knowledge of particular virtues or vices, exploits or sufferings, will have informed us of the ultimate success of the hero, or "told the instructive tale" of his misfortunes and his fate.

Again, it may be said, that historical novels blend more of the instructive with the amusing, than any others; that they enable us to gain much information with little labour. Confined and strangely perverted must be his knowledge of history, who seeks for it in the pages of a novel. The nov-

elist is not expected to relate all even of those actions which denote most plainly the character of the person whom he describes. He selects those circumstances that are best calculated to interest and astonish, and adds whatever will contribute to heighten the effect. Amidst this chaos of truth and falsehood, the person who relies on the novelist for information, will be liable to mistake fiction for reality, and reality for fiction ; and will often make himself ridiculous, when he wishes to appear profound. Instruction is to be bought but by labour. In whatever department of learning we wish to be skilled, we must apply to its proper source. Let us not expect to acquire a knowledge of military tacticks from the marvellous history of the Seven Champions, or a system of morality from the ballad of Captain Kidd. Fortunately for the world, the barriers can never be broken down, that distinguish indolence from application, and ignorance from learning. But we are perhaps viewing this subject too generally : it is probably only meant, that a person, before tolerably versed in history, will often in reading a historical novel meet with facts, with which he was before totally unacquainted. But here the same objection remains in full force. Such a reader is of course not previously acquainted with the fictitious events there related, and consequently the same degree of credit, which he gives to the relation of a fact, of which he was before ignorant, he will be liable to give to the fabulous accounts that are interspersed through the work. Even allowing that he gained the knowledge of a few facts with which he was not previously acquainted, he would see them through a medium so discoloured and distorted, that the information, if so it may be called, would be little better than useless.

Historical novels may be advocated upon another ground. It may be said, that they excite a laudable desire of ascertaining the true state of events ; that we are determined by

motives of curiosity, knowing that a novelist has blended much of fable with truth in his narration, to consult the pages of history. It is extremely doubtful if this effect is produced upon the generality of novel-readers. We take up a novel, of whatever kind it be, with no other view than to amuse an idle hour: if we are amused, we have gained all the object, which we sought in perusing it. If the history proper to be consulted were lying in our apartment, curiosity might prompt us to look into it with the same degree of attention, and the same feelings, with which we read the tale that was borrowed from it: if it were not, curiosity would hardly induce us to take much pains in seeking for it. To those who seriously desire a knowledge of history, the stimulus of a novel will be needless; to those who do not, it will be ineffectual.

In fine, historical novels seem to be a successful attempt to write much with little trouble, but a very unsuccessful one, to give much instruction with no trouble at all.

SNOW STORMS.

A DISSERTATION ON THEIR MORAL, POLITICAL, PHYSICAL, AND SOCIAL EFFECTS.

THOUGH it is not every quarter of the world that is blessed with snow storms, yet so large a portion of its superficies experiences their salutary influence, that we shall not be accused of writing to a party, if we devote a few words to their moral, political, physical, and social effects. We shall not define a snow storm, as we presume most of our readers entertain correct notions of its nature and properties. Referring then our readers to their experience or reading, for their definition of snow storms, we proceed to consider, first, their moral effects.

As we hope the time will never come, when the interests of religion and morality will be disjoined, we notice among the moral effects of snow storms, that when they occur on Sundays, the discourses of the good man must be addressed to the pious few, who fear not the yawning chasm of a snow bank, or the fatal collision of a flake. As horses, especially if skittish, are disinclined to abide the pelting of the storm, and conveyance by carriages is therefore inconvenient, ladies may plead inability as the excuse of their absence. Yet they would do well to consider the unfortunate effects of this absence. They would do well to reflect on the number of young men whose non-attendance is involved in theirs; and of those who desert God's house, when it is not illustrated by female beauty, the number is so great, that we would propose to our legislature to enact a supplementary section to the mad-dog bill, which shall bind every lady in behalf of her respective beau or beaux, that her absence from meeting shall in no case operate as an excuse for the absence of him or them. As another moral effect of snow storms it may be mentioned, that they promote the sale of bad partridges. I remember to have heard a very well authenticated story of a man, who brought a pair of partridges to the market, but which were reduced by a long period of comparatively warm weather to quite an unmerchantable state. As he was returning homeward with his poor partridges, he was overtaken by a heavy fall of snow, which induced him to deposit his stock (stock once live, afterwards dead, but rapidly becoming live again,) in the crevice of a stone wall. About a month afterwards, as he was coming down again to market, he bethought him of his partridges, which being most salubriously preserved by their envelope of snow, produced him in the metropolis an exorbitant price. But we hasten to the political effects of snow storms.

Under this head we shall content ourselves with an ex-

tract from Thucydides, without presuming to allude to the senate of Massachusetts. "And the Danaians availing "themselves of the absence of two deputies, who had been "excluded from the city by an immense fall of snow, attempt-"ed a reorganization of the senate. Their first effort was "immediately to depose their president, whoever he was, "and to elect another more friendly to their principles. It "was next attempted to elect a national senator, to reestab-"lish the court of sessions, in short to undo all that had been "done by the united senate."*

We hasten to the physical effects of snow storms; and here we would observe, that we do not use the word *phys-*

* As this is a matter of some consequence, we give the original Greek, with the translation of Reiske. Και οἱ Δαναοι,* δια της απυσιας δυων πρεσβυτερων, ους νιφας μεγιστη εκ της πολεως εκλιζε, της συγκλητυ τας ευταξιας, τα παντα, αλλασσειν επειρασαν. Πρωτον, επειρωντο ὀντινα† τον αρχοντα αποτιθεναι και προτιμᾶν τον αλλον, τοις εαυτοις συμβυλοτερον. Εγγυτατα, ὁ πρεσβυς της δημοσιας αιρετεος, το αρχειον των εφεδρευσιων αναρβολεος, και απλως λεγειν, τα παντα δια των συνθηκιων‡ πεποιημενα αναιρετεα.

THUCYD. JOUR. SENAT.

Atque DANAI, per absentiam legatorum duorum, quos nix inordinata civitate exclusit, senatûs ordinem totum permutare conati sunt. Primum quemquam præsidem eorum se abdicare jubere, atque alterum illis gratiorem præferre cogitabant. Tunc senatorem nationalem statim creare, curiam sessionalem restaurare, atque denique omnia per fœderales facta, dissolvere putabant.

REISKE, p. 189. ED. AMSTEL. 1778.

* We presume that Δαναοι is translated correctly by "Danaians or Danaites."

† There is undoubtedly a corruption of the text here. Ὀνλινα is derived from Ὁστις, ἡτις, ΟΤΙΣ.

‡ We approve the word "fœderales" [Anglicè *federalists*,] by which Reiske renders συνθηκιων.

ical in its scientifick signification, but in that sense in which it is used by doctors, and old ladies. Not to mention that the great Timour or Tamerlane expired by the use of snow in his wines, we appeal to the scales of the apothecary, to the dairy of the butyrist, and the hogshead of the dealer in molasses, for the physical effects of a snow storm. Let them recount the ounces of Spanish licorice, the pounds of Elix. Paragor. the boxes of butter, and the puncheons of molasses, that are put in requisition by the colds of the metropolis. Not a foot that may be wetted, escapes the cruel foe. At this time of the year, when every head is stuffed to suffocation, and every throat is hoarse with coughing, when a grumbling murmur is all that is left of the hearty lungs and the clear voice, when the ledger of the merchant lies dusty on the desk of its frigid master, and the axe of the mechanick shivers in his hand, when the torpid representative scarce articulates " Mr. speaker," and the proud gamecock hides one claw under his wing, it becomes us to remember the words of Mr. Barlow.

" He comes, the father! from his bleak domain,
" But comes untended by his usual train.
" Hail, sleet, and snow rack far behind him fly,
" Too weak to wade through this petrifick sky."

Let these lines occupy one card rack, and inscribe on the other the following of Mr. Lowbard :

He comes the snow storm from his white domain,
And comes with furious winds and sleety rain.
No common drifts his wondrous progress meet,
No usual slosh fills his blockaded streets.

I figure to my mind, at this moment, the terrours in store for us, that await the dissolution of the body of snow, that now fills up our streets. Whether this vast body of snow will be consumed by any conflagration, which our beacon-

street combustibles may kindle, whether it will evaporate in a thaw, or float off in drenching rains, prophecy cannot guess, but a few weeks or days will determine. A few weeks will present to us the fallacious sidewalk, and the liquid road. Then let foreseeing prudence mend its boots, and tie a handkerchief round its neck: so shall its face be preserved from an inflamation, and the pores of its feet from untimely closure.

The social effects of snow storms are a more agreeable subject of reflection. There is reason to suppose that sleighing is a modern invention. All the passages of history, which have been adduced to establish the opinion, that the ancients were acquainted with this mode of conveyance, have been differently translated by learned men, and the words, rendered sleighs, are supposed by them to mean a sort of mongrel carriage, which rested by its hinder part on the ground, and was mounted on wheels in front. To ourselves then may we arrogate the glory of the invention, and the pleasures of the enjoyment of sleigh-riding. To enumerate all the agremens of this admirable recreation, were a tiresome recapitulation, which few of our readers would value. A few then only shall claim their attention.

It was supposed by the ancients, that gods and goddesses were relieved from the tiresome alternation of pedestrian progress, as it exists among mortals, and that they glided or slipped over the ground without moving their legs, as tin soldiers perform their evolutions under the direction of little children. Now this power of sliding along was considered as a superiority to that successive motion of the legs, which constitutes human walking; and indeed there seems to be something more liberal, unshackled, and sublime in this motion of the gods, than in that of men. I have introduced these remarks to explain the instinctive pleasure, which we

derive from the motion of a sleigh. The motion is far different from that of the equestrian, which in principle does not differ from a walk, or of a wheel carriage, which is occasioned by the application of the successive points of a revolving circle to an immoveable plain. As this subject has not to my knowledge been treated philosophically, I must be excused for that circumlocutory diction, which the want of appropriated terms produces. The sound of the bells is another source of pleasure in sleigh-riding. I confess I cannot explain it, but I think by my own experience, that it is a fact, that the bells attached to a horse, who moves in a brisk trot, appear to the ear of the sleigh-rider to perform the air of Yankee Doodle. It need hardly be observed that this is no trifling source of gratification to the patriotick New Englander.

Who, when commencing a sleigh-ride, on a fine clear evening, does not anticipate with rapture the selected accidental snowbank, at which chance and design intend to overset the sleigh? The female scream, the hearty laugh, the promiscuous scramble, the significant wink of the roused innkeeper, brighten in anticipation, and we almost wish that the bank were a little higher. But our wishes with respect to this bank are frequently, like our wishes with respect to other banks, frustrated by malice or envy. The dull rustick may shovel away one, and a dull c*****ss the other. The rustick may envy the jolly overturn, which he cannot enjoy: The representative the rich dividend he cannot partake.

We must here express our regret for two things, first, that we must so abruptly cut short our dissertation, and secondly, that we have not at hand a preface to Quinctilian by Aldus Manutius, that we might quote correctly a passage, for which, as the case is, we must trust to a very indistinct remembrance. "*Impressoribus*, genus hominum "male patiens, coactus fui ut librum immature ederem."

[Essays on general subjects are seldom very amusing, and it has been our object to avoid them as much as is consistent with our work. A few however, cautiously interspersed through the numbers of the Lyceum, will perhaps afford a variety, that will not be uninteresting. *Ed. Lyc.*]

VANITY.

" ——————Nihil est, quod credere de se
" Non possit." JUV.

There is some weak and vulnerable point in the most guarded mind. To discover this point and preserve it from surprise, is the duty of prudence and of reason: for there the principal attempt of our open or secret foes will be directed; and one undefended avenue is sufficient to betray the whole of the strongest fortress to the enemy. If we have been so remarkably favoured as to have been immersed in the Styx, we should not imitate the imprudence of Achilles, but guard with triple armour the heel that was untouched by the sacred stream.

Vanity makes a greater or less part of the composition of every mind; and is rarely assailed in vain by the arts of an accomplished flatterer: here then we should direct our attention, and supply by vigilance what we want in strength. If we would examine ourselves with half the eagerness and penetration, with which we investigate the characters of others, this weakness would be found, like Satan among the fallen angels, preeminent above the rest of our foibles. Indeed, it is reasonable to go still further, and to suppose that all have not only some portion, but an equal portion of it; and that when we declare one person to be very vain, and another to be entirely free from vanity, we only mean that one is so foolish and imprudent as to " wear his heart upon his

sleeve," and to let every one know the high opinion, which he indulges of himself; and that the other is modest and prudent enough to conceal from others his self-complacency. Since then this weakness is so general, it is our duty to inquire into its nature and effects, and to learn the proper method of avoiding the evils, into which it may betray us.

The greatest evil arising from it is, that it often discovers the weakness of the incautious mind to the interested and designing, and exposes him to the contempt of the one, and the treachery of the other. It is a chord that is often touched, and when awakened by a skilful hand, the soul unguarded and surprised flies from it like the sound from the harp-string. Nor does this subject us only to occasional mortifications; it may embitter our whole lives. What is common to every body, is in the possession of nobody, and few will attempt to acquire his confidence, who makes every man his confident: few will interest him with the secret affections of their minds, who is such a prodigal of his own. A man who thus confides in every one, and receives no one's confidence in return, is wretched indeed. He is deprived of the greatest bliss that can exist on earth: that of pouring our joys and our griefs into the bosom of a friend, and feeling his heart swell with correspondent emotions; that of feeling that we are united to those who share and heighten our pleasures, and, when they cannot pluck the thorns from the couch of distress, cover their points with flowers. These are not the visions of romance, but delightful realities; this is "the language of poetry but not of fiction." The number of those who enjoy this blessing is indeed small, but it is a blessing that exists elsewhere than in the imagination of the poet, or the wild dreams of the enthusiast. Of this, the vain man is forever deprived: for to be loved, we must be respected; but vanity makes us ridiculous as well as wretched. For what can make one more

so, than a heart, whose chords vibrate with every touch of the finger of flattery, and which imprudently displays all its motions to every skilful musician ?

It is the moral of one of the finest novels in our language, that even virtue itself will avail us but little in the eyes of the world, unless assisted by prudence. How happy for us, if we could keep this maxim constantly in view, and be directed by it in all our actions ! It would spare our cheeks many a blush, and our hearts many a pang. We greatly err, if we imagine that the " mens sibi conscia recti" is the only necessary requisite to establish our character in the world. That is indeed of infinite and indispensable importance, but it must not stand alone. If we wish to receive the approbation we deserve, not only our intentions, but our actions, must be irreproachable: we must not only mean well, but *appear* to mean well. This we must do, if we wish for the approbation of the world: that of our own consciences, it is true, is of far greater value, but that of others is by no means to be neglected. Prudence, then, is the most proper preceptor of vanity. Let a man have as high an opinion of himself as he pleases; if he have enough of prudence to conceal it from others, he will lose nothing in their estimation, and little in that of virtue herself. Vanity is interwoven, as it were, with every fibre of the human heart; and how low soever we may fall, there is still something that directs us to virtues within us that do not exist, and palliates faults that are uncensured by none but their possessor. We might as well expect men to renounce their nature, as to depart from this principle of self-love: all we can expect from them is to temper it with modesty and prudence. Modesty and vanity may appear at first view to be incompatible; but they are not. We may have a very exalted opinion of our own understandings; but if we are not overbearing, dogmatical, haughty, or pedantick; if we, in

short, never betray our self-applause to others, but always advance our opinions with due caution and humility, we certainly deserve the double praise of modesty and prudence.

ELOCUTION.

It has always been an important question, in forming systems of education, what relative value should be attributed to the Art of Speaking. The old rhetoricians and the old oratours reposed more confidence on the assistance and attached greater consequence to the art of elocution, than might be readily conceded by instructers or oratours of our day. Action, which includes all the mechanical part of speaking, is no doubt a pretty powerful mean of exciting the passions; but it may be questioned whether it is so efficient or so useful as it is generally supposed to be.

All deliberative assemblies are convened or ought to be to adopt some measures or settle some controversy according to facts, as they may be ascertained, or arguments, as they may be found reasonable and forcible. Perhaps a noisy town-meeting may be excluded by this description from the name of deliberative assemblies, but if it be, it were better that it hear no eloquent appeals to its prejudices or passions. Since then the object of deliberative assemblies is the equitable settlement of doubtful points or the just ordinance of righteous measures, truth is the first requisite for all the addresses, which may be made to such conventions. Plain, clear truth is alone desirable, and every thing of logick or rhetorick, to the exclusion of this, will but be eloquent sophistry. If then the first point be gained, and addresses to deliberative assemblies be characterised by truth, not obscure and too profound, but perspicuous and obvious, the great

value of the additional enforcements and recommendations of mechanical oratory is questionable. It is possible that an elegance of manner unusual and wonderful may even withdraw some of that attention, which ought all to be bestowed on the apprehension, the weighing, and the digestion of what is proposed. I can easily conceive of external accomplishments, which would produce this effect; and which instead of turning the mind to the investigation of a difficult query, or the observation of a remarkable fact, would point it to a graceful gesture or harmonious cadence. So far then as this unfortunate effect may take place, extraordinary refinement in mechanical eloquence, in that eloquence, which consists in graceful ease and happy appropriation of gesture, and in minute and exact modulations of voice, is rather an injury than a benefit of the cause, which eloquence of all kinds ought to promote. It is indeed often the duty of an orator to enlighten the ignorant, to persuade the obstinate, and to fortify the timid: but neither knowledge, or conviction, or courage, will often result from musical tones or happy gesticulations. Never may the time come when our deliberative assemblies shall be constituted by the dull or the vicious; may the time too never come when they shall move with the hand, or waver with the voice of the accomplished orator. For my own part I have known men of sound minds and good tempers that never could divest themselves of a natural prejudice against the arts of oratory. And it will be found a common notion, that a charming delivery and prepossessing deportment are oftener the cloaks and visors of deception, than the ornaments and garniture of truth. The conscientious are apt to throw themselves into a position of unnecessary caution, and to guard their minds with a superstitious strictness, when listening to a captivating orator, that will hardly help excluding the real truth. This is the positive injury, which external eloquence may create, and our previ-

ous observations may call in question the utility, which will balance it. On a bad side, in the defence of doubtful arguments, and in the assertion of questionable facts, an elegant delivery may go very far. It may often obtain an unmerited success, convey to sophistry the reward of reason, and invest errour with the robes of truth. But who desires such effects as these? Let us allow with regret that they result, and let us inquire whether on the true side, in the defence of fair reasoning, and in the declaration of occurrences, that may not be gainsaid, it is of indispensable moment to be graceful and harmonious. The obscure may be illumined by perspicuity; the certain enforced by unhesitating steadiness; but they will not be rendered plainer or surer by artificial inflexions or studied cadences of voice.

Of these remarks there may be an abuse, for it is seldom that there is not one in extremes. I would not say that no absence of grace is disgusting, and that no want of smoothness is grating to the ear. There are undoubtedly defects of nature, as well as superfluities of art; and it is one thing to employ without contortion a good audible voice, and another to twang through the nose, or grumble from the throat: it is one thing to enforce by an occasional movement of the arm an opinion or a fact, and another to beat the air as with a flail, or sunder it as with a saw. The speaker must show that he feels, before he calls for sympathetical feeling; he must not therefore wear a lifeless front, nor direct to the floor his closing lids, but he may avoid both without much flexibility of muscles, or without a continual sparkling of his eyes.

Such are some of the reflections that may authorize the opinion that too much stress has been laid on mechanical oratory. It is in fact unquestionably true that, without the natural aptitude, which though sometimes found, is wonderful and rare, very great excellence in elocution cannot be

attained. The history of the stage shows what laborious and persevering exertion is always necessary and often inadequate to make a finished speaker. Let then all care be taken to repress any unnatural habit of the limbs or ungraceful tone of the voice ; let the learner acquire a due knowledge of such inflexions as the distinctions of emphasis require, and he may rest content if unmarked by farther oratorical recommendations. After all, the true statesman is he, who thinks rapidly and justly, whose head is sound and heart is honest ; the true lawyer is he, whose talents deserve and whose patience will endure long and tedious cultivation ; and the true clergyman is he, who spends his time in studying the scriptures, with the faithful commentaries of good and learned men, and who is content to declare the counsel of God, unadorned by the charms of human eloquence. It may be of importance to consider, whether the manner is not often improved when the matter wants correction or augmentation ; and whether time is not devoted to attuning of inflexions or practising attitudes, which were better employed in the abstraction of thought, or the turning of leaves.

MONEY.

We frequently hear philosophers and misanthropes inveighing against the illiberality of those pursuits, whose immediate object is the acquisition of wealth. And it should seem at first sight that it was unworthy the mighty powers of man to toil for a few bits of gold and silver, or a few scraps of paper. But when we reflect that men have agreed to make money the representative, the substitute, and the equivalent for every valuable possession, and for every useful service they have the power to confer on each other, when we consider that it is often the means and oftener the end of all kinds of honour, and when we, above all,

remember that it preserves the morals of its possessour from temptations, which his poverty could not resist, we may learn to look with a more indulgent eye on those occupations, whose intention is the acquision of this " mighty minister." Where is the philosopher, who would reject the elegances of affluence when within his reach, or the possession of the most boundless wealth, did it lay in his power ? We hear indeed poor threadbare moralists, who have scarce a coat for their shoulders and not a penny for their pockets, talk of the vanity of dress and the folly of wealth. But do you ever hear him, whom experience has made a competent judge, whose limbs are arrayed in decent costliness, and whose purse is replete with the stores of opulence, utter his sighs over the vanity or the folly of these good things ? Whoever likes a good house, a good suit of clothes, a comfortable dinner, a warm bed, a clever horse and chaise, or a library, is avaricious, and in proportion to his attachment to them, is his avarice. All these are money, and money is all these. Who would be dissatisfied to have these named as the objects of his desire ? Who then need be ashamed to be fond of money ? Show me the man that is not fond of it, and, to use the old classical phrase, I will show you a man more or less than human. When therefore I hear a man outrageously opposed to money making, one who seems to have set his whole soul to work, in doing his best to discredit the acquisition of wealth, I am sure to say, if you thought that a valuable proportion of this wealth was destined to your conveniences, the angry denunciation would at least be withdrawn, and the curse if not converted to a blessing, become discreetly silent. I would not though apologize for a miser, because to him money is not a convenience nor the means of obtaining any. I know of no happier etymology than that of the name of the coveteous man, of the word miser.

POETRY.

INSCRIPTION

For that appendage to a modern lady, successively called "RIDICULE" and "INDISPENSABLE."

WHEN the pocket, long stationed at side of the fair,
Was banished by fashion's command,
A substitute wanted became her next care,
And I was consigned to the hand.

While cynicks beheld me with sneer and with scorn,
Wits a name undertook to bestow,
Which, as "*ridicule*" seldom is willingly borne,
Should fashion's decree overthrow.

But vain was th' attempt, for still fashion prevailed,
And e'en her opposers must own,
That I, though by sneers and by laughter assailed,
Am now *indispensable* grown.

Nor my station despise, but in candour look round,
And perhaps in the world you'll descry
Indispensable trifles, that often are found,
As useless and worthless as I.

Yes—with me join the ball or the tea-party—there
See a thing—they miscall it a man ;
Who seems destined, like me, as a toy for the fair,
And to carry her 'kerchief and fan.

LINES

Written in anticipation of a much-desired event.

YES ! time the happy day will bring ;—
Yet ah ! not then will droop his wing ;

But, urging on his ceaseless flight,
Bring other days and years to light;
Till this bright scene which now appears
The end of all my hopes and fears,
Instead of expectation's dream,
A speck on memory's tablet seem.
And when hope's earthly visions fly,
And memory's faint impressions die,
And these loved joys have lost their power,
And time leads on life's latest hour;
Still will he keep his onward course,
Of varied good and ill the source,
Until at length himself shall be
O'erwhelmed in vast eternity.
Then why for trifles of a day,
Thus bows my soul to passion's sway?
Why for one moment does it sigh,
And bid the impeding hours to fly?
Oh, teach me, heavenly Father, still
To bend my spirit to thy will,
And meekly for each blessing wait,
And calmly meet the powers of fate;
And, while life's little space is given,
With patient hope prepare for heaven!

TO A CORRESPONDENT.

WE have received from a friend, to whom we believe we are indebted for a poetical communication handed to us some time ago, the first number of a series of moral and literary essays. To accuse a stranger of vanity may seem hard, but we would remind our friend that he makes too free with the names of the great British Essayists: and if he will take our counsel without smiling at it, it is to learn a little more, before he begins to publish his knowledge. The verses to which we allude were some lines, supposed to be recited by Thaddeus Sobieski, on leaving the continent; and we confess, that though we learnt many a lesson of credulity in Miss Porter's romance, such a supposition as this is too monstrous even for us.